

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 6, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A thermoplastic elastomer composition of the invention ~~according to Claim 1~~ comprises an ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1) and a crystalline polyethylenic resin (2), wherein the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) is in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Such EAO-based copolymer (1) may for example be an ethylene-propylene copolymer ~~as well as those described in Claim 2 such as~~, an elastic copolymer whose main component is an olefin, including ethylene-propylene-non-conjugated diene terpolymer, ethylene-butene-1 copolymer, ethylene-butene-1-non-conjugated diene terpolymer, ethylene-octene copolymer, ethylene-octene-non-conjugated diene terpolymer and the like. Two or more of these polymers may be employed in combination. A non-conjugated diene as a constituent of the EAO-based copolymer (1) may preferably be ethylidene norbornene, dicyclopentadiene and 1,4-hexadiene. Such non-conjugated diene is present preferably in such an amount that gives an iodine value of the EAO-based copolymer not more than 40 ~~as described in Claim 3~~.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The "crystalline polyethylenic resin (2)" described above contains ethylene as a main component, which is present in an amount of 90 to 100 % by mole. Also, ~~as described in Claim 4~~, 10% by mass or more (preferably 20 % by mass or more, usually 95% by mass or less) of such crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) is preferably insoluble when the resin is

dissolved in a boiling n-hexane. The insoluble less than 10% by mass leads to a poor mechanical strength and a poor moldability of a resultant thermoplastic elastomer composition. The melting peak of the crystal measured by DSC is preferably 100°C or higher.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 15, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A thermoplastic elastomer composition of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~ comprises as main components an ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1), a crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and a block copolymer (3) described below, wherein the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) are in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The “ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1)” and the “crystalline polyethylenic resin (2)” ~~described above~~ are those ~~in the invention according to Claim 4~~ described above. The “block copolymer (3)” described above is capable of binding the EAO-based copolymer (1) to the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2), the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) are considered to be capable of forming a three-dimensional network structure in the EAO-based copolymer (1).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A crystalline ~~ethylene~~ polymeric block possessed by the block copolymer (3) may for example be a copolymer block whose ethylene unit content is 50 % or more or a polymer block comprising an ethylene homopolymer. ~~As shown in Claim 6, the~~ The block copolymer (3) preferably has crystalline ~~ethylene~~ polymeric blocks at its both ends. By having such

crystalline polymeric blocks at the both ends, a particularly uniform three-dimensional network structure can be established. Such three-dimensional network structure formed in the EAO-based polymer consists usually of the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) as main components. Thus, each of the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) is a constituent of the three-dimensional network structure.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Furthermore, this block copolymer (3) is, ~~as described in Claim 6,~~ obtained by hydrogenating a block copolymer whose blocks at its both ends are those represented by A (a butadiene polymeric block having a 1,2-vinyl group content lower than that in B) and whose intermediate block is that represented by B (a conjugated diene polymeric block and/or a vinyl aromatic compound-conjugated diene random copolymeric block having a 1, 2-vinyl group content higher than that in A), and wherein A is present in an amount of 5 to 90% by mass (more preferably 10 to 80% by mass) based on 100% by mass as the total of A and B, and wherein the 1,2-vinyl group content in A is less than 25% by mole and the 1,2-vinyl group content in B is not less than 25% by mole, and wherein at least 80% of the all double bonds contained in the block copolymer (3) before the hydrogenation is saturated and the number average molecular weight is 50,000 to 700,000.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 22, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~ may be a plural of block copolymers (3) which are linked via coupling agent residues. Thus, a structure [A-B-A-X]<sub>n</sub>-(A-B-A) [wherein n is an integer of 2 to 4, and X is a coupling agent residue] may be acceptable. Furthermore, [A-B-X]<sub>n</sub>-(B-A) [wherein n is an integer of 2 to 4, and X is a coupling agent residue] may also be acceptable, as long as the molecular weight of the

coupling agent residue is smaller sufficiently relative to blocks A and B and does not affect the crystallinity of the block copolymer (3). Thus, when abbreviating a relatively smaller coupling agent residue, [A-B]<sub>n</sub>-A may be acceptable. A coupling agent may for example be diethyl adipate, divinylbenzene, tetrachlorosilicon, butyltrichlorosilicon, tetrachlorotin, butyltrichlorotin, dimethylchlorosilicon, tetrachlorogermanium, 1,2-dibromoethane, 1,4-chloromethylbenzene, bis(trichlorosilyl)ethane, epoxylated linseed oil., tolylene diisocyanate, 1,2,4-benzenetriisocyanate and the like.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 7~~ may be a modified hydrogenated block polymer which has been modified with a functional group. Such functional group may for example be at least one selected from the group consisting of carboxyl group, acid anhydride group, hydroxyl group, epoxy group, halogen atoms, amino group, isocyanate group, sulfonyl group and sulfonate group. A method for such modification may be any method known per se. The functional group content in this modified hydrogenated block polymer, based on 100 % by mole as the entire constituent units of the hydrogenated block polymer, is preferably 0.01 to 10 % by mole (more preferably 0.1 to 8 % by mole, particularly 0.15 to 5 % by mole). A preferable monomer which can be employed for introducing a functional group may for example be acrylic acid, methacrylic acid, itaconic acid, maleic acid, maleic anhydride, glycidyl acrylate, glycidyl methacrylate, allylglycidyl ether, hydroxyethyl methacrylate, hydroxypropyl methacrylate, hydroxyethyl acrylate, hydroxypropyl acrylate, dimethylaminoethyl methacrylate and the like.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 12, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~As shown in Claim 8, the~~ The amounts of the EAO-based copolymer (1), the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) to be contained in the invention ~~according to Claim 7 may be:~~ the EAO-based copolymer is present in an amount of 10 to 94 % by mass (more preferably 20 to 94 % by mass, particularly 25 to 94 % by mass, especially 40 to 90 % by mass and most preferably 50 to 94 % by mass) , the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) is present in an amount of 5 to 80 % by mass (more preferably 5 to 50 % by mass, particularly 5 to 30 % by mass) and the block copolymer (3) is present in an amount of 1 to 80 % by mass (more preferably 2 to 50 % by mass, particularly 3 to 30 % by mass) based on 100 % by mass as the total of these three components The EAO-based copolymer (1) content less than 10 % by mass leads to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer composition having a sufficient elasticity recovery, while one exceeding 94 % by mass leads to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer having a sufficient moldability. The crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) content less than 5% by mass leads to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer composition having a sufficient elasticity recovery, while one exceeding 80% by mass leads to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer having a sufficient elasticity. The block copolymer (3) content less than 1% by mass lead to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer composition having a sufficient elasticity recovery, while one exceeding 80% by mass leads to a difficulty in obtaining a thermoplastic elastomer having a sufficient moldability.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~Also as described in Claim 9, a~~ A mineral oil-based softening agent can be added in an amount of 200 parts by mass or less (more preferably 100 parts by mass or less, particularly 50 parts by mass or less) based on 100 parts by mass as the total of the ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1), the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3).

The mineral oil-based softening agent may for example be a naphthene-based or paraffin-based mineral oil and the like. The processability and the flexibility can be enhanced by adding such mineral oil-based softening agent. The method for adding such oil and the process for such addition are not limited particularly.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 17, line 16, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A foam of the invention ~~according to Claim 10~~ is a foam whose main component is a thermoplastic elastomer composition comprising an ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1) and a crystalline polyethylenic resin (2), wherein the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) is in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1). A foam of the invention ~~according to Claim 11~~ is also a foam whose main component is a thermoplastic elastomer composition comprising as main components an ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1), a crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and a block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~, wherein said crystalline polyethylenic resin(2) and said block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~ are in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene - $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1). A foam of the invention ~~according to Claims 10 and 11~~ as described above has a three-dimensional network structure which is not formed by a chemical crosslinking and also has an excellent elasticity recovery and flexibility. undergoes an uniform forming, a highly closed cell, an uniform cell shape and size and an excellent appearance.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

A method for producing a foam of the invention ~~according to Claim 12~~ comprises incorporating 0.01 to 20 parts by mass of a foaming agent to 100 parts by weight of a thermoplastic elastomer composition comprising an ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1) and a

crystalline polyethylenic resin (2), wherein the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) is in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene - $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1) followed by foaming. A method for producing a foam of the invention ~~according to Claim 13~~ also comprises incorporating 0.01 to 20 parts by mass of a foaming agent to 100 parts by weight of a thermoplastic elastomer composition comprising as main components an ethylene- $\alpha$  olefinic copolymer (1), a crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and a block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~, wherein the crystalline polyethylenic resin (2) and the block copolymer (3) of the invention ~~according to Claim 5~~ are in a three-dimensional network structure in a matrix comprising the ethylene- $\alpha$ -olefinic copolymer (1) followed by foaming.